REPLY TO FINAL OFFICE ACTION
Serial Number: 09/456,652
Filing Date: 08 December 1999
Title: Self-Describing Device Interface System
Assignee: Lexmark International

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Remarks

Please reconsider the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Status of Claims

Claims 1-47 stand rejected. Claims 1, 10, 16, 23, 32, and 38 have been amended to include the subject matter of dependent claims 42-47, respectively. Claims 42-47 have been canceled. Claims 1-41 remain pending.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC §102

Claims 1-47 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,845,058 to Shaw et al. ("Shaw"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

The independent claims 1, 10, 16, 23, 32, and 38 all recite a " metavariable." According to the Free On-Line Dictionary of Computing (www.foldoc.org), "meta" is defined as follows:

> A prefix meaning one level of description higher. If X is some concept then meta-X is data about, or processes operating on, X.

> For example, a metasyntax is syntax for specifying syntax, metalanguage is a language used to discuss language, meta-data is data about data, and meta-reasoning is reasoning about reasoning.

Accordingly, the customary meaning of "metavariable" is a variable that specifies other variables. This definition is further supported by the specification on page 7, lines 12-13, which states "[t]he metavariable can thus imply one or more existing variables of the devices that already govern the parameters of the device." To provide further clarification, the independent claims 1, 10, 16, 23, 32, and 38 have been amended to recite "the metavariable is treated as a single variable containing data cumulative of variables for each parameter," which was previously recited in dependent claims 42-47. Examples of metavariables for print quality are shown in FIG. 1 of the present application.

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Applicant submits that Shaw does not disclose such a "metavariable" that is "treated as a single variable containing data cumulative of variables for each parameter." When referring to a "metavariable," the Office Action refers to sections of Shaw that describe an enhanced metafile header 12 and a device context. Applicants respectfully point out that neither of these data structures are metavariables that are "treated as a single variable containing data cumulative of variables for each parameter," as recited in amended independent claims 1, 10, 16, 23, 32, and 38.

A "metafile" is defined as "[a]n image file format for transport between different machines, often as a device independent bitmap." See Free On-Line Dictionary of Computing. Consistent with this definition, Shaw states that "metafiles typically hold metadata that specify how to draw the associated picture rather than bitmaps of the associated picture." See Shaw, col. 3, lines 13-15. Although the metafile header disclosed in Shaw may include variables (see column 3 of Shaw), this does not make the metafile header or the metafile a "metavariable" that is "treated as a single variable containing data cumulative of variables for each parameter." The variables in the metafile header appear to be treated as multiple individual variables and would likely result in the same problems addressed in the Background section of the present application.

Shaw states that the "device context is a data structure that holds information about a graphics output device, such as a printer." See Shaw, col. 7, lines 21-23. Although it is possible that this information may include multiple variables, the inclusion of multiple variables, by itself, does not make the data structure a metavariable. Nothing in Shaw discloses that the device context data structure is a variable that specifies other variables and that is treated as a single variable containing data cumulative of variables for each parameter.

With respect to previous dependent claims 42-47, the subject matter of which has been added to independent claims 1, 10, 16, 23, 32, and 38, the Office Action refers to column 7, lines 34-45 of Shaw. The referenced section of Shaw describes the steps performed to store a document as a set of enhanced metafiles including the creation of a device context for the enhanced metafile. This section does not refer to a metavariable much less a metavariable that is treated as a single variable containing data cumulative of variables for each parameter. As

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mentioned above, neither the metafile header, nor the device context, is treated as a single variable.

Because Shaw does not identically disclose each and every element and limitation recited in amended independent claims 1, 10, 16, 23, 32, and 38, applicants submit that these independent claims, and the claims dependent therefrom, are not anticipated by Shaw. Accordingly, applicants request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) be withdrawn.
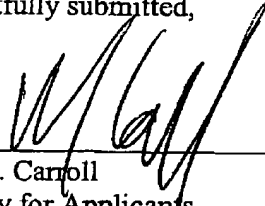
Conclusion

The claims have been shown to be allowable over the prior art. Applicant believes that this paper is responsive to each and every ground of rejection cited by the Examiner in the Action dated April 27, 2006, and respectfully requests favorable action in this application. The examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned, applicant's attorney of record, to facilitate advancement of the present application.

Please apply any charges not covered, or any credits, to Deposit Account 50-2121 (Reference Number LE9-99-111).

Respectfully submitted,

Date July 13, 2006

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